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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined second to fifth periodic reports of Zimbabwe

Addendum

Information provided by Zimbabwe in follow-up to the concluding observations*

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Note: The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Introduction

1. The Government of Zimbabwe submitted and presented its combined CEDAW report for the second to the fifth reporting periods in 2012. Following up to the concluding observations by the CEDAW Committee, the State party was requested to provide a midterm report on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 14 (a) and (b) and 24 (a), (b), (c), (d) and (g). This report therefore seeks to provide feedback on progress made by the State party in the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations.

Paragraph 14 (a): Constitutional review

2. The Committee in paragraph 14 (a) of its concluding observations urged the State party to speed up its Constitutional review and repeal section 23.3 of the Constitution, which allowed discrimination on the bases of sex/gender in matters that fall within the provisions of personal and customary law. Zimbabwe successfully concluded its Constitutional reform process in 2013, resulting in the repeal of section 23.3. The new Constitution in Section 2 (1) reiterates the supremacy of the Constitution and highlights that any law, practice, custom or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid to the extent of the inconsistency.

Paragraph 14 (b): A bill of rights for women

3. In line with the Committee's recommendations on the inclusion of a bill of rights for women in the Constitution, Zimbabwe's new Constitution in Section 56 provides for equality and non-discrimination and subsection 2 states that women and men have the right to equal treatment including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic and social spheres. Further, section 56(3) provides an elaborate list of grounds for non-discrimination which includes sex, gender, marital status and pregnancy. Section 80 of the Constitution is solely dedicated to women's rights and part 3 clearly outlaws all laws, customs, traditions, and cultural practices that infringe on the rights of women conferred to them by the Constitution.

Paragraph 24 (a): Measures to prevent and address violence against women and girls

4. The Government of Zimbabwe recognises that violence against women is a form of discrimination and constitutes a violation of women's rights. To this effect, the Constitution in Section 25 calls upon the State and all agencies of Government to adopt measures for the prevention of domestic violence. In addition Section 52 (a) of the Constitution on Personal Security provides that every person has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right to freedom from all forms of violence from public or private sources. As previously reported in the previous report, the Government of Zimbabwe enacted the Domestic Violence Act in 2007 to provide for relief and protection of survivors of Domestic Violence. The Act provides for establishment of Victim Friendly Units at every Police Station to ensure survivors report their cases in a survivor friendly environment. In addition the Government of Zimbabwe enacted the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act in 2006, which criminalises rape and other sexual offenses.

5. In 2012, the Government of Zimbabwe developed a Multi-Sectoral Protocol on the management of Sexual Abuse and Violence in Zimbabwe with the aim of

providing comprehensive and coordinated response to the management of sexual abuse. The Protocol provides for the establishment of Victim Friendly Courts which protect vulnerable witnesses in sexual abuse cases. The Protocol also clearly assigns roles and responsibilities of various players in the management of sexual abuse.

6. Zimbabwe has established One Stop Centres for survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV) with the aim of creating a safe and supporting environment for survivors of GBV. The model is designed to reduce the number of institutions that a survivor must visit to receive basic support following an incident of GBV. The services offered at the One Stop Centres are health services, legal services and psychosocial support services. The Government of Zimbabwe is also working on strengthening the GBV referral pathway. To this effect a national GBV Referral pathway has been developed; subsequently location-specific referral pathways have also been developed so as to sensitise communities of the GBV services available in their locality. Within the referral pathways, medical services have been identified as most critical which survivors need to access before any other services, especially in cases of sexual violence.

Paragraph 24 (b): Mandatory training for judges, prosecutors and police on handling women victims of violence

7. In line with the Committee's recommendation on mandatory training for judges, prosecutors and police officers on handling women victims of violence, the Government of Zimbabwe, guided by the Protocol on the Multi-Sectoral management of Sexual Abuse and violence in Zimbabwe (2012) is continuously training judicial officers, police officers, health personnel and other sectors responsible for the management of survivors on how to offer survivor friendly services. In addition, the Zimbabwe Republic Police in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) developed a handbook on effective Police Response to violence against Women and Children. The handbook is meant to guide in-service training for police officers on how to effectively respond to cases of violence against women and children. Further, the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development is working on the incorporation of a Gender Based Violence module in the pre-service training curricular of judicial officers, police officers and health personnel. The modules will form part of the pre-service training of everyone going through nurse-training, police training and judicial training.

Paragraph 24 (c): Measures for encouraging women to report incidents of domestic violence

8. In line with the Committee's recommendation with regard to encouraging women to report incidents of domestic and sexual violence, the Government of Zimbabwe is implementing the 4Ps Campaign on zero tolerance to domestic violence (the 4Ps stand for: Prevention, Protection, Participation and Programmes). The campaign is a community based awareness programme that focuses on raising awareness on domestic violence, popularises the Domestic Violence Act and strengthens the capacity of communities to establish mechanisms for preventing and responding to domestic violence. In line with the 4Ps campaign, targeted awareness campaigns have been launched targeting hard to reach areas, religious groups, people living with disabilities and schools with information on gender based violence, gender based violence laws and channels for redress in case of violations.

Paragraph 24 (e): Strengthening the capacity of existing shelters and establishing more shelters

9. In line with the Committee's recommendation on the need for the State Party to provide adequate assistance and protection to women victims of violence, by strengthening the capacity of existing shelters and establishing more shelters, especially in rural and remote areas, and enhancing cooperation with NGOs providing shelter and rehabilitation to victims, the Government of Zimbabwe has partnered with Musasa, a Non-Governmental Organisation to provide Community Based Shelters and urban shelters for survivors of gender based violence. Community Based Shelters have been established in six districts of the Country which are rural and remote communities. The shelters are meant to provide temporary shelter to the survivors of gender based violence whilst they receive counselling, life skills and other GBV referral services.

Paragraph 24 (g): Collection of statistical data on domestic violence disaggregated by sex, age, nationality and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

10. The Government of Zimbabwe through the Zimbabwe Statistical Agency (ZIMSTAT), which is mandated with the production of national statistics, has a system of collecting data on domestic violence and sexual violence which is disaggregated by sex, age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The Demographic and Health Survey which is conducted every four years has a questionnaire on domestic violence. This captures information on domestic violence disaggregated by sex, age and relationship with the perpetrator. Other once-off surveys on GBV have also taken the same format.